Salem Witches.

by

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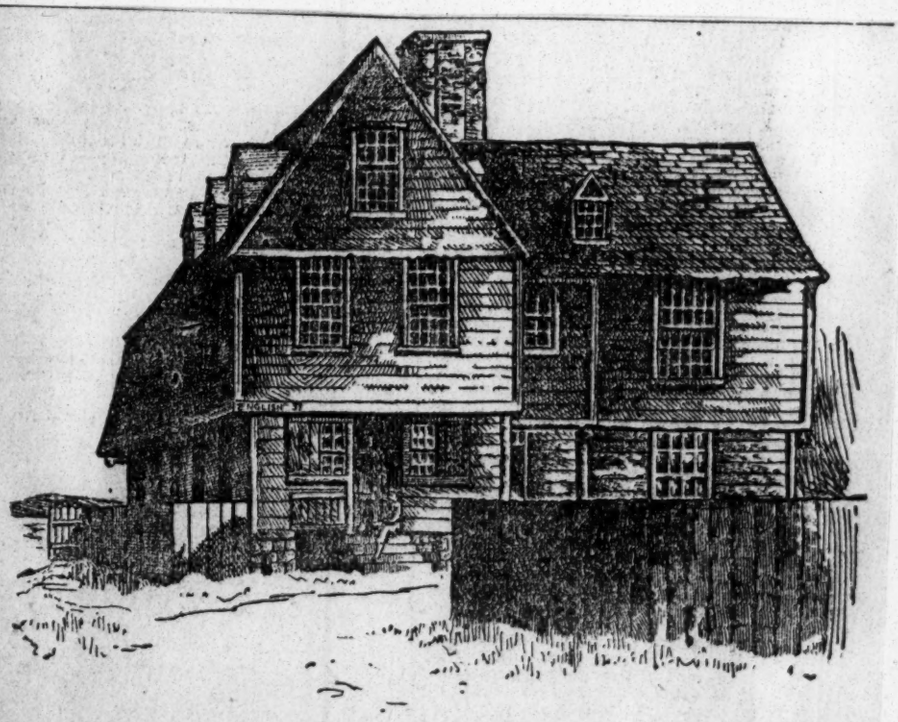
THE TRIAL OF JACOB.



PHILIP ENGLISH HOUSE.

Boston Journal
6 Feb 17. 1892

SALEM WITCHES.

Bi-Centennial Anniversary of the Famous Craze.

Witchcraft Spots in the Historic Town Described.

Interesting Reminiscences of the Strange Delusion.

Danvers to Celebrate the Centennial To-Day.

"The cautious goodman nails no more
A horse shoe on his outer door,
Lest some unseemly hag should fit
To his own mouth her bridle bit,
* * * * *
Our witches are no longer old
And wrinkled beldames Satan-sold,
But young and gay and laughing creatures,
With the heart's sunshine on their features,
Their sorcery—the light which dances
Where the raised lid unveils its glances."

So sings the loved poet of Oak Knoll, long ago encompassed by the witchery of the fair daughters of Salem and her countryside, nor yet passed from its spell. Yea, verily, witchcraft is still abroad within her borders, as the youth of

COTTON MATHER.

the town will testify, and none of them so ungallant but will attest the truth of that tender and loving portraiture of ye Salem witch of to-day.

The love of the uncanny, the weird, and the mystifying is upon us still. The sons are delving yet more deeply than the fathers into the mysteries of the unknown—the wonders of electricity, of animal magnetism, and of natural phenomena—all of which held their place in that "black art" of two hundred years ago, which formed the basis of Salem witchcraft.

The light thrown upon them by the advance of scientific research has rolled back that dark and terrible pall of fanatical superstition which enveloped the colony in 1692.

Yet 'tis well to remember that:

"Falsehoods which we spurn to-day
Were the truths of long ago;
Let the dead boughs fall away
Fresher shall the living grow."

The modern conception makes ye witch of the olden time a somewhat festive old lady, with sugar-loaf hat tied under the ears, long flowing tresses, attenuated form but ample skirts, who rides the broomstick in the full light of a crescent moon, with a black cat perched on her shoulder. The "carlin's" cheeks are pinched and sunken, and her chin has an upward turn to meet her very aquiline nose. Her piercing gaze sweeps the starlit sky. This creature figures on the Salem spoon, with the witch pins, cat, and grim hempen cord. She is met with frequently both in verse and prose. It was one of her ilk who chased the luckless Tam O'Shanter's mare and robbed her of her flowing tail. The sisters of Hecate were of her kind, and she may have been the original Witch of Endor, who recalled to Saul the wraith of Samuel to pronounce the terrible doom of that wretched king, but she wasn't the Salem Witch of veritable history.

Its queer old rambling houses, rich in their hoard of traditionary lore, its witch pins, its Gallows Hill, where real witches were hung, its black jack and its Gibraltars, have as much, and even more perhaps, to do with the charm attaching to Salem town as the delicious aroma of old India gums and spices, and sandalwood, long since disposed of, still hovering in the decaying old warehouses which once contained them, or the collection of rare and wonderful

curios from "the farthest point of the rich East," in the East India Marine Museum, gathered by the gallant captains of the famous ships of other days.

Salem witchcraft, and the distinction of being the place where the witches were hung, gives the old city a large share of its enduring historic fame, and draws to it year by year an ever increasing train of visitors. And yet, that which has become robbed of its terrors by the passage of two centuries, and is now a dream of the past, its stern character lost in all the fantastic imagery of poetic romance, was in its reality one of the most appalling, disgraceful and wicked delusions that has ever darkened the page of history.

Thus in the approaching bi-centennial anniversaries in Danvers and in Salem, the children of the fathers, both of the ancient village and the town, see only welcome opportunities to express their recognition of the great wrong committed, and of the heroism and Christian martyrdom of that remarkable company of men and women, who yielded their lives on the tree, by the hangman's rope, on the crest of Gallows Hill, rather than to renounce their faith in God and their hope through Christ of a blessed resurrection—than to admit the mastery of that arch-fiend, Satan, the popular belief in whose personality really raised all the mischief in 1692.

The despised witches, and wizards, too, have long since become canonized in the neighborhood in which they lived. In fact, those who cannot claim witch blood in their veins, in lineal descent, have come to feel a something lacking in their family tree.

Singularly enough, too, of all the array of lying accusers, consequential clergy and pompous Judges and court officials, but little if any trace is left among the families in Salem Village or its neighborhood. They have become but a memory so disagreeable to recall that by common consent it is dropped altogether.

Witchcraft Localities.

The visitor who drops down in Salem in quest of witchcraft lore will, upon reaching the top of the short rise to the square surmounting the tunnel, find himself at once upon historic ground. At his right, on the further corner of that site, now occupied by the substantial brick church and business edifice, at the junction of Higginson square and Essex street, stood the first Protestant church in America, built in 1634 and enlarged in 1639 and again in 1670. It was into this latter edifice that Rebekah Nurse, the pious witch of 1692 was brought in her chains to be formally excommunicated and given over to the devil.

Directly in front of it, looking down the ancient Town House Lane, stood the old original Court House of the Colonies, in the middle of the street, nearly opposite what are now Lynde and Church streets.

On the western side of the way was the home of Rev. Nicholas Noyes, on the site of the present Brookhouse estate. He was the ordained teacher of the First Church from 1683 till his death, Dec. 13, 1717. Mr. Noyes was a fine scholar and able preacher, but he was completely swept away by the witchcraft delusion. It was he who was present at the last execution on Gallows Hill, on the 22d of September, and, "turning him to the bodies," said, "What a sad thing it is to see eight fire brands of hell hanging there."

Directly opposite his house, by strange coincidence, on the corner of Washington and Church streets, extending back, covering the site of the present Lyceum Hall, was the town homestead of Bridget Bishop, the first victim of the witchcraft accusers to suffer death. She received this property from her second husband, Thomas Oliver, who died in 1679.

Naught remains of these old buildings but a tablet on the iron fence in front of the Brookhouse estate on Washington street.

Returning to Essex street and passing to the eastward, the course of the hangman's cart is traced down through Prison lane, St. Peter street, to the original gaol, then upon the western side of the way, not far from the present corner of Federal and St. Peter street. This building, so far as its original timbers go, forms a part of the present residence of Abner C Goodell, Esq., at No. 4 Federal street.

Coming back to Essex street and continuing on to the lower portion of the town, the original First Church of 1634, a portion, at least, of the building of 1692 may be found directly in the rear of Plummer Hall, now the property of the Essex Institute. Still further down, on the site of the present estate at No. 63 Essex street, stood the tavern of Thomas Beadle, a famous hostelry of the witchcraft days, in which the preliminary examinations of George Jacobs, Sr., and Margaret, his daughter, were held on the 10th of May, 1692, at which Sarah Churchill, the old man's handmaid, tore false witness against him, as she afterwards admitted with much contrition.

At the very end of the town, down near the water, stood the house of Philip English, one of the finest types of the old school colonial mansions, occupying the site on the southern side of Essex street, embracing the area between English and Webb streets. The residence, with its many gables, was for a time held to be Hawthorne's Mythical House of the Seven Gables, until its destruction some years ago, since when another existing homestead bears the title.

Here comes 'round the corner the witch's modern coach, with its careful man, who

> "Whenever the evil-minded witch
> Would cut some caper gives a twitch"

to that string tied to the mythic leg of the hag above that good Dr. Holmes tells us of, and though, as he says, "you can't see her," you hear sure enough "her black cat's purr,"—

> "And now and then, as a train goes by,
> You may catch a gleam of her evil eye."

Just a short ride up town through the narrow business street of Salem's tradesmen, and then above North we come out upon the broad and beautiful avenue, following in the major part of the trial of the witches' cart of '92.

At the corner of North and Essex streets is the Roger Williams, or old Witch House, as it is familiarly known, built in 1635. This old dwelling stands upon the western corner and has suffered many alterations in its more than two centuries of existence, but enough is left to show its original quaintness of architecture, with its overhanging second story. The rear portion is much more antiquated than the front.

This house was the home of Jonathan Corwin, the Magistrate. There is a tradition that the preliminary examinations or trials of the accused were held here. Rev. Charles W. Upham, Salem's best authority on witchcraft history, was of the opinion that one form in which this tradition has come down was probably correct. There may not have been accommodations for both the grand and the petit juries in the Court House, both holding their sessions at the same time, and it is quite possible that the Grand Jury held its hearings and examined witnesses in the spacious southeastern room of this old house, a portion of which is still shown to visitors. The late George P. Farrington, to whose estate this house now belongs, always claimed proof positive that witch hearings were held in this mansion, and it continues to be familiarly known as the Witch House. It is a very interesting old dwelling to examine.

Upon the opposite side of the way still stands another old witchcraft house, nearly opposite the North Church. This residence was the home of Samuel Shattuck, the hatter and dyer, a very active person, says Mr. Upham, in getting up witchcraft charges against persons in his neighborhood. It was mainly upon his evidence that Bridget Bishop, the first witch victim, was brought to the gallows. The Widow Oliver, as she was familiarly called, was fond of gay colors and bright contrasts, affecting black and scarlet combinations in her dress. She also brought Samuel, who was a son of the Quaker of that name and a plain man by reason of his sect, "sundry pieces of laces" of shape and size beyond his conception of what would be needed for the toilet of a plain and honest woman. He regarded this as proof corroborative of her dealings with his satanic majesty. Samuel Shattuck also had a son who was afflicted with grievous fits and who refused to come to his wife for either cake or money until he had been helped off a board on which he persisted in lying as though enchanted. A stranger to the Shattucks having called and

pronounced the child bewitched, and by his intimations suggested Bridget, Samuel closed his deposition with the words "and, by these circumstances I do believe that the aforesaid Bridget Oliver—now called Bishop—is the cause of it; and it has been the judgment of doctors, such as lived here and of foreigners, that he is under an evil hand of witchcraft."

There were also on this side of the way the homes of John Cook, next to Shattuck, opposite the eastern entrance to the North Church yard, and of John Bly, in the rear of Cook, his house fronting on Summer street. It was Cook's 18-years-old son who woke in the morning to see the form of Bridget Bishop standing in his chamber and disappear through a crevice in the window so small that he could put his hand into it. And it was John Bly and Rebecca who had a trouble with Bishop about paying for a sow they bought of her, the which creature was afterwards taken with strange fits, as though stark mad, and ran back and forth between the house of the deponents and of Bishop, but was saved by a "big dose of red ochre and milk."

Witch Hill.

Stopping the car at the corner of Hanson and Boston streets, a short climb brings us to the highest point in Salem, from whence a glorious view of sea and shore is spread out to the gaze. It is the crest of the ridge which, ever since that fatal summer 200 years ago, has borne the title "Gallows Hill," though of late years the more euphonious "Witch Hill" has been substituted.

Crossing Grafton street, on the left, upon the very brow of the highest portion, there is enclosed a nearly level piece of land, which for years has been denominated upon the city maps as Witch Square. It is a piece of common ground which has always belonged to the City of Salem, before that to the town, and in the earlier days undoubtedly to the ancient commoners. It has for two hundred years and more been public property.

This at present unimproved field is believed to have been the place of execution. Entering the enclosure, we stand upon sacred grounds, for upon this spot, as fixed by well preserved continuous tradition, were hanged the 19 unfortunate persons who would not renounce their religion and confess the devil to be their master.

The place is, "as it were," as Rev. Mr. Upham styles it, "a platform raised high in air." It is a point from whence the sad spectacle upon it could be viewed from the surrounding country far and near.

The historian says "as it was believed by the people generally that they were engaged in a great battle with Satan, one of whose titles was 'the Prince of the Power of the Air,' perhaps they chose this spot to execute his confederates, because in going to that high point they were flaunting him in his face, celebrating their triumph over him in his own realm."

Though there is no contemporaneous or subsequent record that the executions took place on the spot assigned by tradition, still that tradition has been uniform and continuous, and the square, having from the beginning belonged to the town and the city, what is more probable than that it was used for its public purposes.

It is learned from a letter written by Dr. Edward Holyoke in Salem, dated Nov. 25, 1791, that "in the last month there died a man in this town by the name of John Symonds, aged an hundred years lacking about six months, having been born in the famous '92. He has told me (writes the doctor) that his nurse had often told him that while she was attending his mother at the time she lay in with him, she saw, from the chamber window, those unhappy people hanging on Gallows Hill, who were executed for witches by the delusion of the times." John Symonds lived and died (according to Dr. Bentley,) in a house on the south side of Bridge street, near the southern end of Beverly bridge.

From that spot this point on Gallows Hill is in full view at any time, while no other point in that direction would be discernable. Here, then, far above the town and its dwellings, the hangman did his work, and in yonder slight ravine to the eastward the bodies of the victims were thrown into the rock crevices without the privilege of Christian burial, for so imbued were the people with the horror of the supernatural that it was believed that he who touched the body of witch or wizard succeeded to the "black art" practised by its previous possessor.

It was therefore an act of great personal bravery and heroism on the part of the sons of Rebekah Nurse, the witch of pious memory, to climb the slopes of Gallows Hill in the darkness of midnight, hunt out the remains of their beloved mother among the slain, and bear them tenderly across the fields and over fences and walls, for upwards of three miles, to give them decent and Christian burial on the dear home farm from whence she had gone to face her accusers.

On the night of the 19th of August, the day of his execution, the body of George Jacobs was similarly removed by his young grandson, strapped to the back of a horse and brought home to the farm, where the old man was laid to rest beneath the shade of his own trees.

With these exceptions, the other bodies were left where they were thrown, with simply a

persons cried out against—on the 10th of May, 1692, and Ann Foster, who was examined on July 15, and a confession extorted from her, and who must have died sometime after, but before the release of the accused in May, 1693.

Looking off from the hill far down into the town we may locate the spot just back of the tower of St. Peter's and the stone walls of the jail where in the open field Giles Corey yielded his heroic spirit beneath the vice-like pressure of the crushing weights placed upon his breast, rather than plead to the demand of the implacable Judges and jurors, and to save his estates to his children.

To Salem Village.

Now, as we stand here, the curtain of two hundred years rolls back, and we are looking out upon a charming country in all its natural beauty. Below us the old road winds not altogether as we came, but following higher up the valley to get round the little estuary making in from the broad and sparkling North River, filling all the space now dubbed as "Bluegr Hollow," the highway bears off to the southwest, sweeps round in a curve by what is now the Leonard Harrington tannery and comes into Essex street pretty well over to what is the head of the present Broad street. There is what is called the Town Bridge across the creek just mentioned. And this old road skirts along the rugged ledges on the southern side of Gallows Hill, strikes in quite near to the present David Nichols estate at the turn on Proctor street, follows not much off the line of the present Prospect street on the slopes of the Witch Hill ridge passes through the South Parish, winding along over a part of the course of Central and Andover streets until it enters the edge of Salem Village in present Tapleyville, and meets the old Ipswich road not far from the Francis Nurse farm.

Then it winds off through Danvers Centre thin covering of earth cast upon them, until after the delusion had spent its force and passed away, when they were removed and buried doubtless elsewhere.

The Witches.

Here on this hill top were executed for witchcraft:

On the 10th of June, 1692, Bridget Bishop, wife of Edward Bishop, the sawyer.

On the 19th of July—Sarah Good, a wandering outcast; Sarah Wildes, daughter of William Wildes of Ipswich; Elizabeth How, wife of James How, Jr., of Topsfield; Susanna Martin of Amesbury, and Rebekah Nurse, wife of Francis Nurse, of Salem Village (Tapleyville).

On the 19th of August, Rev. George Burroughs, the persecuted minister of the Salem Village Church; sturdy John Proctor, who would not desert his wife Elizabeth and suffered death in consequence; George Jacobs, Sr., the old man of 80; John Willard, the husbandman, who escaped to Groton, but was brought back and hanged, and Martha Carrier of Andover, whose children were ensnared to testify against her.

On the 22d of September, Martha Corey, third wife of Giles Corey, who concluded her life with an eminent prayer on the ladder; Mary Easty, wife of Isaac Easty of Topsfield and a sister of Rebekah Nurse; Alice Parker, wife of John Parker of Salem, whose husband was too fond of the seductions of

Samuel Beadle's tavern, and whose disapproval of the latter led to her condemnation; Ann Pukeator, widow of Jacob, a woman of 70 years of age; Margaret Scott; Wilmot Reed of Marblehead; Samuel Wardwell of Andover, an carnal confessor, but who was too much of a man to remain in that crowd, recanted and suffered death; and Mary Parker of Salem.

These last were "the eight firebands of hell" mentioned by Pastor Noyes of the First Church. Beside these 19 there had died in prison and in chains Sarah Osborn—one of the first three into the heart of the ancient village and on to Boston town.

As we follow its turnings, it is quite probable that we shall find Cotton Mather, himself, pass swiftly by just as he

> "Came galloping down
> All the way to Newbury town,
> With his eyes agog and his ears set wide,
> And his marvelous oak-horn by his side,
> Stirring the while in the shallow pool
> Of his brains for the lore he learned at school,
> To garnish the story, with here a streak
> Of Latin, and there another of Greek,
> And the tales he heard and the notes he took—
> Behold! Are they not in his Wonder book?"

Keeping this pedantic dominie in sight, we shall find him guiding us across "Strong Water" Brook, in our present Poole's Hollow, and thence over "Spoone's Plain," bearing to the right over "Gardner's," or, as we now know it, "Goldthwaite's" Brook, through an open country, skirting the base of "Read's," now "Baxton's," Hill, and giving us charming glimpses over the Northfields and the "Wooleston," now Danvers River to "Ryal Side," or of the Orchard Farm, Governor John Endicott's especial pride, farther up, at the confluence of Crane and the Cowhouse Rivers.

The highway leads by the home of Susannah Sheldon and her daughter, near the fork of the road with the old road to Ipswich, and the house of Walter Phillips, whose site is now occupied by the residence of Francis Peabody, Jr.

Turning to the left, a striking old-time mansion engages attention. It was the home of Francis and Rebekah Nurse. The house still stands to-day. Its timbers hewn from the solid oak, by the broad axe, have withstood the decay of more than 250 years, for this old homestead was originally erected in the years between 1636 and 1641, by Townsend Bishop, the original owner of the Nurse Farm of 300 acres. The house is three stories on the gable ends, with long, sloping roof to the low kitchen, lean-to in the rear. Francis Nurse purchased it of Rev. James Allen in 1678 for £400.

Our way takes us across Hadlock's Bridge up by the Danvers Centre Church, as we know it to-day, and stopping here we find ourselves on the spot from whence started Salem witchcraft, four good miles from Gallows Hill, and at least five miles from Salem town and its old Court House.

The Village Meeting House.

The meeting house did not stand exactly on the site of the pretty half Dutch, half colonial church edifice that we know to-day, but a short distance away, on the plot to the northeast, on the north side of Hobart street, which was the old Meeting House road of the village.

It was a two-story wooden structure with a door on the side and one on the end. The original dimensions were 34 feet in length by 28 feet broad, and 16 feet between joints. The vote to build it was passed Dec. 26, 1672. In March it was agreed that a fifth part of the rate for building and finishing the meeting house should be paid in butter at 5 pence a pound or wheat at money price, or in money, and the rest of the pay in such pay as should carry it along. In 1684 the building was not altogether complete, for it was voted to hang six casements in the meeting house, and that there be a canopy set over the pulpit. Galleries were added a little later. In this house the earlier preliminary examinations of the witches in the village were held. It gave place in 1701 to a new and larger church.

Close by the meeting house in the bend of the old road as it curves off towards Andover was the tavern of Nathaniel Ingersoll. The present parsonage of the Danvers Centre Church stands upon the lot. In front of the house was an open green known as Ingersoll's Common. He came to this place when about 19 years of age. Very soon after he brought home a bride, Hannah Collins of Lynn, and here he lived for more than 70 years. He was a man of consequence—the village innkeeper. He posted the sentry maintained day and night at the block house, which stood on his land to the northeast, and where a watch was kept to guard against Indian attacks.

For the public accommodation he was licensed to keep a victualing house; a so to sell beer and cider by the quart on the Lord's Day. Travelers through the country stopped at Nathaniel Ingersoll's corner. The earliest path or roadway to and from the Eastern settlements went by it, and here we shall find Cotton Mather himself casting his bridle upon the neck of his horse and dismounting at the door. Both of the Mathers—Revs. Increase and Cotton—and all the Magistrates were entertained here. Ingersoll was a man of great benevolence. He was made Deacon of the church by the Rev. Samuel Parris, who was his near neighbor in the minister's house hard by.

Where the Mischief Started.

And now we come to where the mischief began. A little farther along the road towards Andover was the home of Rev. Mr. Parris, and just beyond it the residence of Captain Jonathan Walcot.

In the minister's house there was wont to gather in the long winter evenings of the early winter of 1691-2 a coterie of precocious children, idle, mischievous young girls, to listen to the weird tales of Tituba, the pastor's bond woman, whom he had brought with her husband, John Indian, as his slaves from the West Indies, where he had been a merchant prior to his entering the ministry.

Mr. Parris himself was born in London and was 35 years of age when he first appeared in Salem Village in the fall of 1688. He was a student in Harvard University, but did not graduate, and he had been not only a merchant in New Spain, or the West Indies, but also in Boston. He succeeded Mr. Deodat Lauson as pastor of the Salem Village Church, and was in fact the first ordained pastor, his four predecessors being simply ministers. The church covenant was drawn up on his coming, and according to the records is "agreed upon and consented unto by the Church of Christ, at Salem Village at their first embodying in ye 19 Nov., 1689," which was the date of Mr. Parris's taking office. The pastor drove a hard bargain with his people before taking settlement with them. He set himself about impressing upon the people of the village the great supremacy and majesty of the church over Satan and his legions.

"His former residence in the neighborhood of the Spanish Main, and the prominent part taken by his Indian slaves in originating the proceedings at the village, may account," says Upham, "for some of the features of the transaction."

"The Witchcraft Accusers."

The girls gathered in the parsonage to practice palmistry, fortune telling and to learn the wonders of necromancy, magic and spiritualism, in which the wily West Indians were adepts. Beside the servants there were the pastor's daughter—Elizabeth, aged nine, a remarkably precocious child, who was early removed from the scene by her father; Abigail Williams, the niece of Mr. Parris, and a member of the household; Ann Putnam, daughter of Sergeant and Thomas Putnam, the Parish Clerk and Recorder, a girl of 12 years of age, who was in a large degree the leading agent in all the subsequent mischief; Mary Walcot, a young miss of 17, whose father was Jonathan Walcot, the captain of the village troop, a deacon of the church, and the near neighbor of the pastor; Mercy Lewis, aged 17, who when quite young lived for a time in the family of Rev. George Burroughs, whom she afterwards cried out against, and who in 1692 was a domestic in the family of Thomas Putnam; Elizabeth Hubbard, another girl of 17, who was a niece of Mrs. Dr. Griggs, living in her family; Elizabeth Booth and Susannah Sheldon, each 18 years of age and belonging to neighboring families; Mary Warren, 20 years of age, a servant in the family of John Proctor, and Sarah Churchill, who was about as old and who was the chambermaid of George Jacobs, Sr.

Besides these "children," as they were called, there were Mrs. Ann Putnam, the mother of the girl of that name; Mrs. Pope; a woman named Bibber, who appears to have lived in Wenham, and was a gossip and malicious busybody, and another married woman by the name of Goodel, who is spoken of as "ancient," but who apparently had not much to do with the proceedings after the first outbreak.

How It Began.

The girls and the children were eager learners from the crafty Tituba, and progressed rapidly in voudoo arts. There were at first no charges made, but there were strange exhibitions by the young people in their evening circles. They crept into holes and under chairs. They had strange fits and contortions. They acquired the art of flushing their faces, becoming apparently insensible and almost in a rigor mortis, and then instantly recovering. They made fearful outcries, and writhed in alarming spasms. Very soon the goings on at the Pastor's house were town gossip, and discussed at every fireside far and near. The village physician, Doctor Griggs, was called in, and after a sage diagnosis he gravely declared the children bewitched and "under the evil hand," which was the popular conclusion when maladies refused to yield to the prescribed remedies.

The Age of Demonology.

It was the age of witchcraft. The current belief in demonology dated back years before. As far back as 1560 witches had been burned. In 1484 Sprenger published his "Hammer of Witches;" in 1629, Paul Layman issued his "Judicial Processes Against Sorcerers and Witches;" John Gaule of London in 1646 published an octavo entitled "Select Cases of Conscience Concerning Witchcraft," and treated of "The Gypsy, or Fortune Telling Witch," "The Prognosticating Witch," "The Chanting or Calculating Witch," "The Venefical, or Poisoning Witch," "The Conjuring Witch," "The Gastronomic Witch," "The Arted Witch," and "The Necromancer."

Witchcraft did not originate in Salem. Rev. Cotton Mather preached to his people in the Old North Church in Boston that "No place that I know of has got such a spell upon it as will always keep the devil out. When we are in our church assemblies, oh, how many devils do you imagine crowd in among us? There is a devil that rocks one to sleep. There is a devil that makes another to be thinking of—he scarcely knows what himself."

A witch was believed to have the power of operating on her victims at any distance by the instrumentality of puppets. A pin stuck in the puppet would pierce the flesh of the person whom she desired to afflict.

Margaret Jones, who was charged with having a malignant touch, which made persons coming in contact with her deaf and ill as though by physic, was executed in Boston in 1648.

Mary Parsons of Springfield, wife of Hugh Parsons, was sentenced to death in 1651 for witchcraft, and the people of Salem Village had the remarkable case of Mrs. Ann Hibbins of Boston, wife of William Hibbins, who was widowed in 1654 and hanged as a witch the year following—1655. The charge against her appears to have been that "she unhappily guessed that two of her persecutors, whom she saw talking in the street, were talking of her, which, proving true, cost her her life."

Bridget Bishop was tried for witchcraft and acquitted in 1680. In 1688 an Irishwoman named Glover was executed in Boston for bewitching four children named Goodwin.

There were, however, two different views held regarding the agents of the devil in Salem. Both agreed that he worked his hellish machinations through human kind, but one held that the human agent could not be an innocent person, and that he or she must renounce their faith in God and give their souls to Satan, while the other doctrine espoused by many was that the devil might come in any person's shape entirely without the knowledge of the individual, and he be innocent of any effort to injure the bewitched persons who claimed to be afflicted through his agency.

The Clergy Called In.

It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that the expressed belief of the doctor found ready credence throughout the village, and that all should agree that the children were bewitched. Seeing the effect produced, the girls became bolder. It is not the opinion that at first they had any intention of accusing any body or going to the lengths they afterward did but they took a wicked delight in practicing upon the credulity of the village folk, and the ostentatious complacency of such learned students as the Rev. Cotton Mather, whose zeal to convince his fellow creatures of his supremacy over Satan led to his woful and sad undoing in the end.

The girls extended their operations beyond the parsonage and their own families to public places. On a Lord's Day Abigail Williams, in open meeting, insolently commanded Mr. Deodat Lawson, the preacher, "to stand up and name your text," and Mrs. Pope broke in with "Now there is enough of that." An aged member of the church being present against whom a warrant for witchcraft had been obtained the day before, Abigail Williams called her name in service and said, "Look where she sits on the beam, sucking her yellow bird betwixt her fingers." Ann Putnam, joining in, exclaimed, "There is a yellow bird sitting on the minister's hat." Mr. Lawson remarks, with much simplicity, that these things "did something interrupt me in my first prayer, being so unusual," but he gathered up and went on with the service. The girls were not rebuked, for they were supposed to be under an irrisistible supernatural impulse.

Rev. Mr. Parris, instead of checking the silly and artful proceedings going on in his household, called in his brother clergymen, the Deacons and the Elders to unite with him at his house in a day of earnest supplication for rescue from the power of the great enemy of souls. The ministers came and the children were delighted to perform their pranks before them, finding great sport in doing so no doubt, and chuckling when by themselves over the sincere horror expressed by the men of God. The ministers indorsed Doctor Griggs with one accord. The whole village became lost in a whirl of fanaticism apparently with but few individual exceptions.

"Who was the agent of the devil bewitching the girls?"

The afflicted children were pressed to say who it was. They held back from answering, but they had gone too far in their folly, and finally cried out "Good," "Osbun," "Tituba." On the 29th of February, 1692, warrants were issued for the arrest of the trio. The complainants were Joseph Hutchinson, Edward Putnam, Thomas Putnam and Thomas Preston, all men of standing and repute, a fact which shows how nearly unanimous was the belief that the girls were bewitched.

The Hearings Begun.

On the first of March the two leading magistrates—Justices John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin—came into the village with great pomp, escorted by the Marshal, constables and their aids. The people were ready to receive them and an immense concourse gathered on Ingersoll's Common, so large that there was an adjournment to the meeting house. There was an opening prayer. Sarah Good, a poor, broken-down creature, deserted by her husband, wandering from door to door, begging a living for herself and children, was first arraigned.

Sarah Good's Examination.

She was asked what evil spirit she had familiarity with, and she said "None."

"Have you made no contracts with the Devil?"

"No," was the reply.

"Why do you hurt these children?"

"I do not hurt them. I scorn it."

"Who do you employ then to do it?

"I employ nobody."

"What creature do you employ then?"

"No creature; but I am falsely accused."

"Why did you go away muttering from Mr. Parris his house?"

"I did not mutter, but I thanked him for what he gave my child."

"Hathorne desired the children all of them to look upon her and to see if this were the person that hurt them; and so they all did look upon her, and said this was one of the persons that did torment them. Presently they were all tormented.

"Sarah Good, do you not see now what you have done? Why do you not tell us the truth?

Why do you thus torment these poor children?"

"I do not torment them."

Such is the form of questioning adopted by the Magistrates, which has come down in the court files. Finally Sarah Good accused Sarah Osbur of bewitching the children. The report further says that Good's answers were all "given in a very wicked and spiteful manner," reflecting and retorting against the authority with base and abusive words; and many lies she was taken in." Her husband was "afraid that she either was a witch or would become very quickly." He told the Worshipful Mr. Hathorne that his reason for saying so was "her bad carriage to him; and indeed," said he, "I may say with tears that she is an enemy to all good."

Justice Hathorne appears in this examination to have based his examination upon a foregone conclusion of the prisoner's guilt. No counsel was allowed the witches.

Sarah Osbun was the widow of Robert Prince, who left a valuable farm near the present Porphyry Hall at Beaver Brook. This farm was entailed to his two sons. Alexander Osbun, his gardener, who came over from Ireland, married the widow in the hope of getting the property. There is a tradition in the family that Alexander was at the bottom of the witchcraft accusations made against Sarah, his wife, and was suspected of wishing to get her out of the way to get the farm in his own hands. If so he obtained his just deserts, for after her death he was met by the entail, and Sarah Osbun's sons were not deprived of their inheritance.

The examination of Osbun was upon much the same line of procedure as that of Good. She denied that she harmed the children.

Tituba appears to have freely admitted her connection with witchcraft, and, it is believed, was actuated by an artful purpose to help along the conspiracy and tricks of the children. She said the devil came to her and bid her serve him to hurt the children. She introduced the idea of the midnight ride of the witches, and swore that she had ridden on a stick over the tops of the trees with "Goody Good" and

GOVERNOR BRADSTREET.

"Goody Osbun." The devil showed her a "yellow bird" and "two cats—a red cat and a black cat." All three of the women were committed to Boston Jail. There they were loaded with chains in accordance with the custom.

Rev. Sam: Parris eposeth that all the children were grievously afflicted till Tituba began to confess, when all became quiet and remained so. Titubu was herself greatly afflicted.

Loaded With Chains.

There is a charge in the records of these items in the Boston jailer's bill: "May 29, 1692, to chains for Sarah Good and Sarah Osbun, 14 shillings; to the keeping of Sarah Osbun from the 7th of March to the 10th of May, when she died, being 9 weeks and two days, £1 3s 6d."

The examinations of the others were much the same. Old Giles Corey, who had been a rough man in his early history with his neighbors, had joined the church in 1691 at the age of 80. He had buried two wives and was living with his third, Martha, when the witchcraft excitement broke out. He believed in the accusations of the children; his wife, a godly woman, did not, and he got quite angry with her when she tried to prevent his going to the examinations. She was cried out again in consequence, and was arrested on the 19th of March. From her position in the church this act of the accusing children was of great boldness and tended to convulse the public mind. She was shrewd enough to ask that Ann Putnam, who claimed to have seen her form approach her, should tell what clothes she then wore, but Ann was artful, and said "that the Devil blinded her eyes that she could not see," and Mrs. Corey's question was turned against her by the Magistrates. Her husband Giles was at first a witness against her, but soon repented of it and recanted his statements. Martha Corey's prosecutors sought to show that her frequent and long prayers were addressed to the Devil.

Other arrests of the persons already named followed rapidly.

Rebekah Nurse was the daughter of William Towne of Yarmouth, England, where she was baptized February 21, 1621. Her sister Mary Easty was hung as a witch, and another sister, Sarah Cloyse, was sentenced.

Rebekah Nurse's purity and nobility of Christian faith stands out in bright contrast with that of her judges. She had piously gone to God in behalf of the poor afflicted persons. When told by Israel and Elizabeth Porter that she herself was spoken of, she replied, "Well, if it be so, the will of the Lord be done." She sat as it were amazed, and said, "Well, as to this thing, I am as innocent as the child unborn; but surely," she said, "what sin hath God found out in me unrepented of that He should lay such an affliction upon me in my old age?" Forty of her friends and neighbors tried in vain to save her.

Darkness and gloom had settled over the village when Deodat Lawson, the predecessor of Mr. Parris in the ministry, came back on the 19th of March. Mary Walcot went to see him immediately and had a fit on the spot. His mind was filled with horror and amazement. He saw subsequently Ann Putnam, the wife of Thomas, grievously sick. She went into a state of supernatural vision and exaltation and had a terrible fit, during which she begged of him to read the third chapter of Revelation, which he did, and immediately she was well. The parson was astounded. On the next lecture day—Thursday—he preached to an excited audience, who crowded the building, the famous witchcraft sermon which has gone into history from the text, Zechariah, iii., 2: "And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked from the burning." He told his awe-struck, fanatical hearers that Satan never worked more like the prince of darkness than when he looks most like an angel of light, and when he most pretends to holiness, he then doeth most secretly and by consequence most surely. That sermon was like a match to tow.

From the hour of its close no one felt safe, all sense of security was lost. The examinations were a farce. If a person were cried out, death stared the accused in the face. The word of the girls was taken, though Goody Bibber of Wenham was detected in the act of sticking pins into herself at one of the hearings. The result was the arrest of upwards of 150 persons and the deaths of 22, of whom 20, counting Giles Corey, were executed.

The Frivolous Charges.

The charges were often frivolous and absurd. Blithe Susannah Martin, coming up from Salisbury on a sloppy day, kept her snow white underskirts and shoes so dry and neat that the slatterns of Salem cried out against her that she must be a witch because she came so dry. The widow Martin was a short, active woman, wearing scarf and hood, plump and well developed, and wonderfully neat. A Newbury woman testified that she came to her house in an extraordinary dirty sea-

son, and when the housewife expressed her surprise at her having ventured abroad in such bad walking, and bade her children make way for her to come to the fire to dry herself, she replied that "she was as dry as I was," said the hostess, and "I was startled at it, that she should come so dry, and told her that I should have been wet up to my knees, if I should have come so far on foot." She replied that "she scorned a drabbled tail," and thus it was that Susanna came to the gallows. She must be a witch to pick her way so daintily and suffer no drabbling.

Bridget Bishop was in 1666 the Widow Wasse. She married Thomas Oliver, and after his death Edward Bishop, "the sawyer." Bridget had a taste for gay colors. She wore "a black cap and a black hat and a red paragon bodice," bordered and looped with different colors. She had little regard for conventional decorum, and her freedom from the Puritan austerity brought her into disrepute. The tongues of the gossips were set against her as early as 1680, when she was tried for a witch but acquitted. She kept a house of entertainment at Royalside, with "shovel board," and ordinary probably. She resented aspersions cast upon her character, and her tongue was sharp. The most absurd testimony was taken against her.

Sarah Cloyse could not bear the spirit manifested by Rev. Sam. Parris in his sermon on the Sunday following the harrowing scenes at the arraignment of her sister Rebekah. She hurriedly left the church. The wind caused the door to slam. Mr. Parris attended to her case. Soon after she too was a witch, charged with biting the flesh of John Indian.

Rev. George Burroughs was engaged to preach in Salem Village in November, 1680. He was a graduate of Harvard in 1670, and is supposed to have been born in Scituate. He was preaching at Casco (now Portland) in 1676, when 32 of the inhabitants were killed by Indians, and he escaped to an island. He had a hard and bitter experience as pastor in Salem Village and left the parish early in 1683. He was at Wells in 1690, and was known as "the little black minister that lived at Casco Bay," being of small stature and dark complexion. He was possessed of marvelous strength, which, unfortunately for himself, was ascribed to supernatural power. It was sworn to at his trial, "that, being a little man, he had performed feats beyond the strength of a giant, to wit: had held out a gun of seven feet barrel with one hand, and had carried a barrel full of cider from a canoe to the shore."

"So did an Indian, that was present, do the same," replied Burroughs,

Instantly, the accusers said it was "the black man or the Devil, who," they swore, "looks like an Indian."

Thomas Greenslitt swore to seeing Mr. George Burroughs, that was lately executed at Salem, put the forefinger of his right hand into the muzzle of the barrel and hold the gun at his arm's end.

Governor Bradstreet.

Thus far Governor Simon Bradstreet, then 87 years of age, the old charter Governor of Massachusetts, held the reins of Government. He was wisely conservative, and it is the belief that, though there had been witches hung in the past, he deprecated the Salem outbreak, and had he remained, it would never have got beyond that town or attained the dimensions it did.

But his Deputy Governor, Thomas Danforth, was greatly excited, and on the 11th of April with his advent with the Council at Salem, at the trial of Sarah Cloyse and Elizabeth Proctor, the State formally took up the matter. The Marshal was Herrick. After that the witchcraft horror spread over Andover and throughout Essex county.

The trials were very exciting. The first death warrant, that of Bridget Bishop, is given with this article. It is the only one preserved, whether because after the reaction there was a desire to obliterate the foul disgrace upon the colony or because of the pilfering of antiquarians is not known.

Sir William Phipps came as Governor on May 14, 1692. William Stoughton superseded Danforth as Deputy and was made Chief Justice of a new Court of Oyer and Terminer, with Nathaniel Saltonstall of Haverhill, Major John Richards of Boston, Major Bartholomew Gedney of Salem, Mr. Wait Winthrop, Captain Samuel Sewall and Mr. Peter Sargent of Boston, as associates. Jonathan Currier of Salem succeeded Saltonstall, who withdrew early from the service.

Only one conception of the scene at a witch trial befor this court has been handed down to us. It is that of George Jacobs, the old farmer, whose house still stands on the right of the road to Danversport, next beyond the Gardner farm. He was 80 years of age, and so afflicted with rheumatics as to be obliged to use two canes, which are now in the possession of the Essex Institute. By the courtesy of Mr. Frank Cousins, by whom it is copyrighted, The Journal presents the scene at the trial of Mr. Jacobs.

His accuser was Sarah Churchill, his former servant, and his grand-daughter Margaret. Both afterward bitterly repented and recanted, but their new statements were not believed. Margaret Jacobs was herself imprisoned as a witch and was in jail at the time of the delivery. She wrote a most touching letter to her grandfather before his execution and one to the Judges who condemned her. The old gentleman, who had not mentioned her in his will, inserted a clause to give her £10 in silver, signifying that he knew of her repentance, which was a great comfort to Margaret undoubtedly.

The heroism of Giles Corey in standing mute and refusing, being willing to be pressed to death rather than to plead, and the final accusation of Mrs. Hale, the wife of the Beverly minister, a woman of such high standing an purity of character as to cause her prosecutors to pause, stemmed the tide of fanaticism and turned the current the other way. The long series of convictions was followed by an era of acquittals, until Governor Phipps himself opened the doors of the jails to a general jail delivery in May, 1693.

Even then the prisoners, many of them, could not gain their liberty until their charges for board and costs were paid. Margaret Jacobs remained for a long period until a citizen paid her costs. Her grandfather's estate had been seized, and all his personal property confiscated by the Sheriff, as was the case with most of the accused.

Wealthy men had been able to escape, as did Philip English, the Salem merchant, with his wife, and some others. This was another matter which opened the eyes of the common people. English returned to Salem and died in 1740.

Of the 150 arrested it is said that 55 confessed and some of them admitted some irregular performances. Many of these, to their honor be it said, recanted and suffered imprisonment and death in consequence.

There was a temptation to confess, because in nearly every instance the self-accusing witch escaped the scaffold.

It is a singular feature of the affair that the homes as well as the names of many of the accusers have disappeared altogether. Samuel Parris was finally driven from his pulpit and left the village, leaving nought behind him.

After his removal from Salem Village he was employed to preach in Stow, afterward at Dunstable and at Sudbury. He died in the last named town Feb. 27, 1720. His later years were darkened with poverty and manifold troubles. The only trace left of him is the tombstone to his wife, Elizabeth, in the Wadsworth Cemetery, which bears this inscription:

"ELIZABETH PARRIS, aged about 48 years,
Dec. July ye 14, 1676.
Sleep Precious Dust, no stranger now to Rest,
Thou hast thy longed wish in Abraham's Brest.
Farewell Best Wife, Choice Mother, Neighbor, Friend,
We'll wail thee less for hopes of thee I ' th' end.
S. P."

Cotton Mather, who had anticipated great personal glory from his share in the delusion, was left by it a wreck, and lost his grasp on the prize he had hoped for, the Presidency of Harvard College. His self-complacency received a blow from which he never fully recovered. His diary of 1724 shows him to be a disappointed old man. He writes that some had sought to affront him by calling their negroes Cotton Mather, and he asks where is there a man with such monstrous relatives as he?

Tradition has it that the accusers came to abandoned and dissolute lives, as one might ex-

pect.

There is much left untold, but to-day at Danvers, and at Salem, on the 29th, the Danvers Historical Society and the Essex Institute will pay proper recognition to the memory of the brave souls who unflinchingly faced the gibbet in the dark days of two hundred years ago.

"The roofless house, decayed, deserted,
Its living tenants all departed,
No longer rings with midnight revel
Of witch, or ghost, or goblin evil;
No pale blue flame sends out its flashes
Through creviced roof and shattered sashes.
The witch grass round the hazel spring
May sharply to the night air sing,
But there no more shall withered hags
Refresh and ease their broomstick nags
Or take those hazel-shadowed waters
As beverage meet for Satan's daughters;
No more their mimic tones be heard—
The mew of cat, the chirp of bird—
Shall blending with the hoarser laughter
Of the fell demon following after."

C. F. W. ARCHER.